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**Testimony before Zoning Commission  
SuperFresh Redevelopment ZC Case 16-23  
Revised for January 24, 2019 Meeting**

**Introduction**

Chairman Hood and Honorable Zoning Commission Members

My name is Doug Barnes and I'm testifying in opposition to the Valor project. I very much favor a scaled down version that takes into consideration suggestions from neighbors. I'm wearing two hats as I appear before you today.

One hat is that I live 4 blocks from the project site and I am in favor of a right sized development.

The second hat is as a bicycle and pedestrian advocate and as a project impact evaluation specialist. Attached to my testimony is a professional white paper that I have written on mobility issues concerning this project.

**A Pedestrian and Mobility Unfriendly Building Design**

In the January 2018 plans, of Valor there was a pathway through the site called Windom Walk (Slide 1). Although flawed, it had potential. Now the building goes curb to curb with no path through the site. They have literally thrown the mobility baby out with the bathwater.

Pedestrians from the neighborhood and the building will use the alleys as the shortest route to Spring Valley Shopping Center and to the future HAWK signal on Massachusetts Avenue. This future HAWK signal will connect pedestrians to retail shops on both sides of Mass. Avenue.

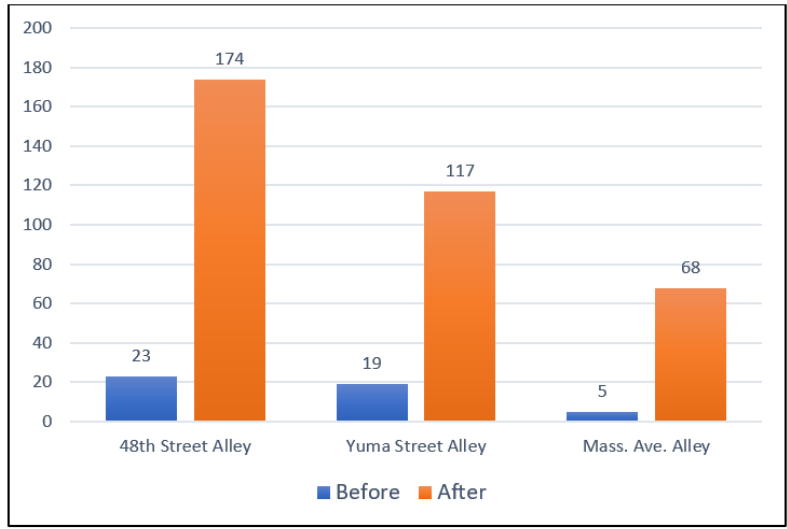
## Slide 1 Windom Walk (Previous Design) and Predicted Pedestrian Pathways to Shopping Centers, New Project Design



Briefly some vehicle numbers on enters and exits according to Gorove/Slade (Slide 2). The before and after figures are for vehicles per hour between 4 and 6 PM.

The vehicles passing through the Yuma Street and alley intersection will increase from 19 vehicles to 117 before and after the project. The enters and exits at the 48<sup>th</sup> Street alley intersection are 23 and 174 before and after the project. This increases alley traffic volume by more than 6 times.

**Slide 2. Gorove/Slade (G/S) Survey of Peak PM Alley Enters and Exits, 2016 and Post Project**

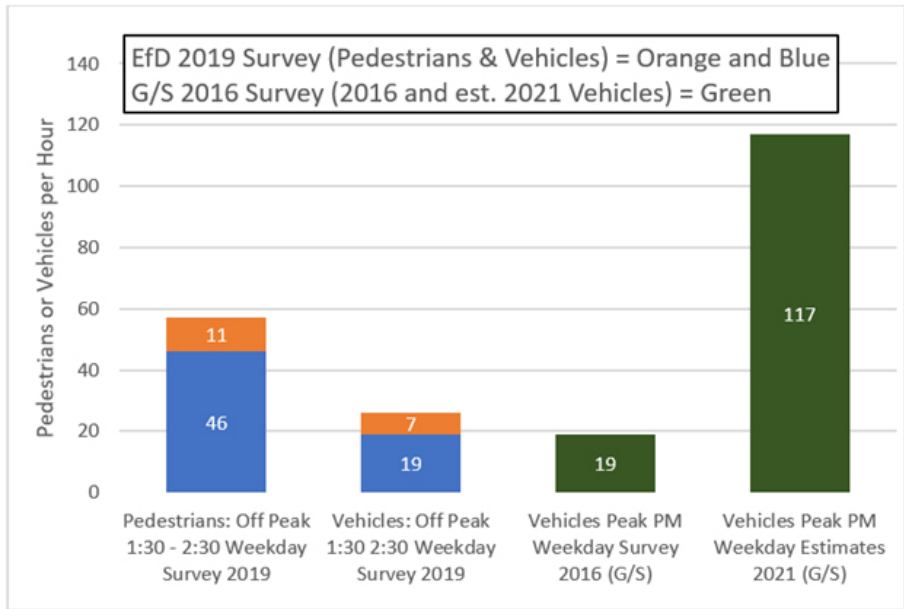


Source: Data from Gorove/Slade 2017

Note: Before are the 2016 levels and after are the levels after the completion of the project in 2021. See note to table 1

According to a survey I conducted recently, the north-south alley is already heavily used by pedestrians at 57 per hour (slide 3). This will only get busier after the new construction.

**Slide 3 North-South Alley: Barnes Survey Off Peak (Orange-Blue) and G/S Peak Survey (Green)**



Source: Gorove/Slade 2017; Energy for Development survey conducted January 2019.

Added to this mix are sidewalks that are inadequate. The sidewalks planned along the north-south alley are only 3 feet wide, bumping up against a vertical wall (slide 4).

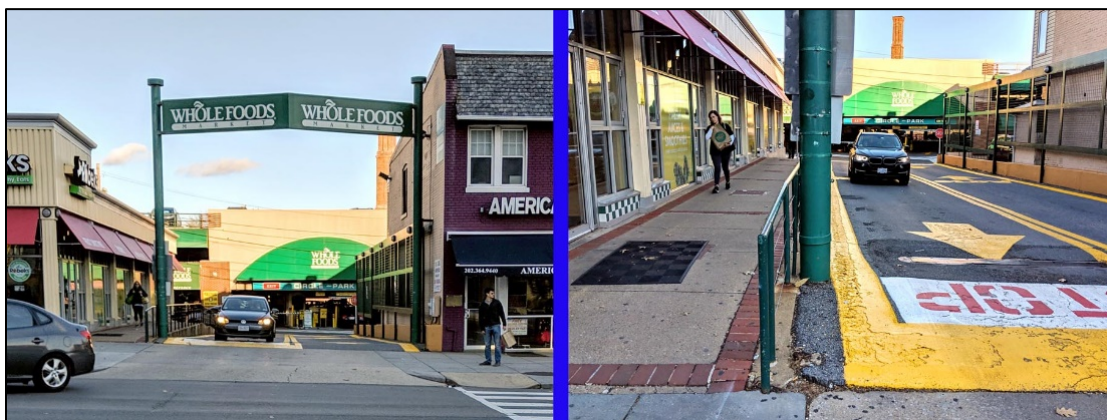
#### **Slide 4. Comparison of North-South Alley with Rough Sketch of After Project**



From a mobility point of view, the new building will turn alleyways into low volume city streets. This creates a loophole so that Valor does not have meet accepted sidewalk codes. With trash pickup bins along a narrow alley, this arrangement will be pedestrian unfriendly and will likely lead to even more accidents in an already high accident-prone alleyway.

Alleys can be made safe as evidenced by the 7 foot alley sidewalk leading to Whole Foods in nearby Tenleytown (Slide 6).

#### **Slide 5. Alleyways Can Be Made Safe for Pedestrians, Whole Foods, Tenleytown, 2018**



## **Conclusion**

To conclude, in its desire to maximize building density, Valor has no private driveways or walkways through the building site. Instead, they use public streets and alleyways to service the residential building and the grocery store. The result is that it creates public mobility safety issues that contradict DC Government's commitment to Vision Zero. Ironically, the response of DDOT and Valor to public safety concerns seems to be--these are just alleys.

This is once in a lifetime building for our neighbors and we need to get it right. The building should be more neighborhood friendly and contain better public realm amenities. It should encourage pedestrian mobility rather than treating walkers as poor cousins to cars and trucks.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.